



NEWS MEDIA CONTACTS:
Jeanne Lopatto 202/586-4940
Bryan Wilkes -- NNSA, 202/586-7371

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**Department Of Energy Launches New Global Threat
Reduction Initiative**

*Will accelerate and expand the security and removal of
proliferation-sensitive materials*

VIENNA, AUSTRIA – In Vienna today, Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham launched a comprehensive global initiative to secure and remove high-risk nuclear and radiological materials that continue to pose a threat to the United States and the international community. The Secretary spoke to an audience of delegates at the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Abraham said that while the Department of Energy has made significant strides in the security and removal of nuclear materials of concern by improving the security of hundreds of tons of weapons-usable material in Russia, there still exists a significant amount of nuclear materials in dozens of research reactors and other locations throughout the world that is of significant proliferation concern and must be addressed as rapidly as possible. The Global Threat Reduction Initiative will be carried out in close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and global partners in order to ensure that such nuclear and radiological materials do not fall into the hands of terrorists or other rogue actors.

“We have worked with Russia to down-blend over 200 metric tons of high-enriched uranium (HEU) from dismantled Russian nuclear weapons, and just in the last eight months have repatriated 48 kilograms of Russian-origin HEU in three separate operations, including the most recent removal of 17 kilograms of Russian-origin HEU from Libya. Nevertheless, we must continue to press forward in our efforts to reduce the threat posed by proliferation-sensitive nuclear materials and high-risk radiological materials,” the Secretary stated.

In order to achieve this, the Secretary has directed the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to consolidate and accelerate the department’s nuclear materials removal efforts and rapidly identify and address any gaps in current security coverage and recovery or removal efforts. Under this new initiative, which will include the establishment of a new office under the Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, the department will develop a threat-based, prioritized approach to systematically address facilities that possess high-risk fissile and other nuclear materials.

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R-04-114

- 2 -

“I have instructed the National Nuclear Security Administration to work closely with the Department of State and other agencies to develop the diplomatic strategy necessary to secure, remove, or eliminate these materials,” the Secretary said. The department will draw from its world class scientific and technical expertise and leverage existing nonproliferation programs to identify and prioritize vulnerable materials, remove or secure such materials, convert research and test reactors, and take any other steps necessary to meet changing threats. This new initiative will build upon existing and long-standing U.S. nonproliferation efforts to minimize and eventually eliminate any reliance on HEU in the civilian fuel cycle, including conversion of research and test reactors worldwide from the use of HEU to the use of low-enriched uranium fuels and targets.

This is just the latest step in the department’s efforts to address the global threat posed by dangerous nuclear and radiological materials. On April 14, 2004, Secretary Abraham directed NNSA to consolidate the U.S. Foreign Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel Acceptance Program within its nonproliferation mission, and instructed the appropriate offices within the department to initiate actions necessary to extend the program’s fuel acceptance deadline. Taken together, these efforts will reduce the threat worldwide of high-risk and proliferation-attractive materials.

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